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ABSTRACT

This book concerns potential and actual uses of service learning as an instructional methodology in teacher education. Section 1 discusses how service and learning are primary to practically all roles teachers play. Section 2, a rationale for service learning and teacher education, shows consistency with Goals 2000, school-to-work transition, and character education. Section 3 describes components of service learning in teacher education: planning, implementation and project monitoring, reflection and celebration, and evaluation and reporting. Section 4 addresses issues and challenges--collaboration, faculty professional development, funding, scheduling and transportation, and curriculum integration. Section 5 offers teacher education students' opinions of service learning experiences: opportunities to learn about people from different cultures; its support of individual growth; and insights gained into the persona of being a professional educator. Section 6 describes promising practices: integrating service learning in the student teaching experience or throughout the internship year, seminars, and journals. Section 7 discusses benefits in three areas: students, faculty, and program functioning. Section 8 addresses three levels of assessment: documenting the status of service learning, assessing its effectiveness in teacher education, and evaluating its impact. Section 9 offers possibilities for putting service learning into teacher education programs. Contains 18 references. (YLB)

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LINKING LEARNING WITH LIFE

Service Learning and Teacher Education

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Service Learning And Teacher Education

by
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About the Book and the Authors

This book is about the potential and actual uses of service learning as an instructional methodology in teacher education. Service learning and teacher education have a common emphasis on service and learning. This book provides information and perspectives on the various dynamics of service learning in teacher education: meaning, rationale, key components, challenges and issues, promising practices, possible benefits, resources, and evaluation. A key focus of the authors is on engaging teacher educators in learning, reviewing, and exploring the many dimensions of service learning and teacher education. Of particular interest is the pursuit of academic service learning as an instructional methodology in teacher education.

All of the authors are currently involved in the University of South Carolina's Service Learning and Teacher Education Project (SLATE). The SLATE Project is funded through a grant awarded by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Corporation for National Service—Learn and Serve America. Authors and their contributions to this book are briefly noted as follows:

Dr. Kevin J. Swick is the lead author of the book. He is Director of the SLATE Project and a Professor of Education at the University of South Carolina - Columbia.

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Terri Williams is the Graduate Assistant for the SLATE Project. Terri is doing graduate work in education and contributed significantly in doing library research and reviewing the manuscript.

Preface

As an early childhood educator, I have always valued experiential learning. As a teacher educator, I have had many reminders that "learning through doing and reflecting" is a powerful means for empowering preservice and inservice teachers. While I have always engaged students in school and community experiences, it was my involvement in transforming the course, Family Life in Early Childhood, that heightened my sense of the value of service learning in teacher education.

In an effort to help students see the importance of families and their role in involving families in children's lives, I designed service learning placements where teacher education students provided assistance to family support agencies, child care centers, and schools. As students completed journals on their experience and discussed their involvement in class, I kept field notes and looked for any prevailing themes these future teachers noted. As the following excerpts suggest, these teacher education students gained many skills and insights relative to how families really live and in relation to their role in supporting and involving families.

> "I have a new respect for families who are homeless. They care for their children and want to be involved. I am able now to see how I can help—maybe in small ways—but I can be a positive influence."

> "I had no idea that parents have such difficult work-family schedules. Being involved in setting up parent meetings made me a contributor and a learner! I will be more sensitive to parent and family needs as a teacher."

My experience in making my course more service learning focused helped me to see how other courses I teach could also be enriched through this pedagogy. I recently developed a graduate course,

Understanding Homeless Students and Families, and integrated many service learning possibilities into it. The result has been that many experienced teachers have engaged in service to agencies that serve homeless families and used these experiences to enrich their classroom teaching.

As the material in this book suggests, service learning and teacher education have many common interests: nurturing a caring perspective, providing means for serving others, engaging students in learning activities, and empowering students to be proactive members of the community.

Kevin J. Swick, Ph.D.
University of South Carolina - Columbia

Service and Learning as Key Elements in Teacher Education

Service is what teaching at all levels is about whether one is sharing knowledge or supporting students in broadening their own learning approach. As educators we are intimately engaged in the process of service (Coles, 1993). In addition, we often engage our students in service activities as a part of their learning. Teacher educators know service closely through their work with students, other faculty, and in their involvement with schools, communities, and professional associations. In a very powerful way, service is the means to teaching and learning.

Learning is the mind and substance of our reasoned interactions with the environment. It is more than knowledge; learning is the power to reflect, refine, and make decisions based on our best insights relative to the challenges we experience (Bruner, 1996). Teachers and teacher educators pursue learning in their development, in their guidance of children, and in their interactions with families and communities. Thus, learning is a journey where each person seeks meaning through inquiry, continually acting upon the environment and refining their beliefs and perspectives as they gain new information (Kinsley, 1997).

Service learning is the formalization of a pedagogical process that focuses on three key elements: 1) articulation of a plan to meet a community need through service, 2) performance of the service to and with others in a systematic way, and 3) reflecting upon the various aspects of the service performed (Fertman, 1994).

Teacher educators have always used some form of service learning in the education of teachers. Involving students in using real experiences to strengthen their understanding of pedagogy is often connected to service performed in classrooms and/or in the community. Thus, the contextual system for planning and using service learning in teacher education is familiar to most teacher educators. We place students in community settings to "serve and learn" through various

roles: tutoring, mentoring, assisting teachers, helping with food drives, supporting homeless students/families, and supporting school-community improvement projects (Lyday & Winecoff, 1998). We engage students in journaling, case study work, class discussion, and in other reflective activities. The service and the learning are primary to practically all of the roles teachers play; thus, service learning is central to the paradigm of teacher education.

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Service Learning and Teacher Education: A Rationale

Service learning is proving to be an integral feature of most educational reform activities. It has been shown to have a positive effect on the achievement, motivation, and work ethic of participating students and is consistent with reform efforts such as Goals 2000, School-to-Work Transition, and Character Education. As the following linkages between service learning and current educational reforms suggest, it is imperative that service learning be included in the education of teachers.

Goals 2000 and Service Learning

Service learning is interrelated with at least three of the national standards for Goals 2000 and provides a strategy through which teachers can contribute to achieving these goals and standards. Consider the following linkages as examples of the critical role service learning can play in meeting these goals.

- School Completion. By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Research has shown that students involved in service learning activities tend to improve their academic performance, school attendance, interest in learning, and behavior and attention in class (Root, 1997). These students also tend to graduate from high school and continue their education.

- Student Achievement and Citizenship. By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.

Service learning contributes to many facets of this goal. For instance, service learning is an integral part of the academic curriculum and enhances academic achievement and attitudes toward both the school and the community. For example, student interest in learning increases when students are engaged in applying new knowledge and skills in real life situations. Learning of academic subject matter is enhanced through service learning (Kinsley, 1997). By participating in the challenges and demands of service learning, students become workplace resources to their communities and can develop many essential citizenship and workplace behaviors. Students learn positive attitudes toward work, showing an increase in attention to workplace behaviors like attendance and sincerity (Waterman, 1997).

- Teacher Education and Professional Development. By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all students for the next century.

Service learning is an essential part of preservice and professional development programs for teachers. An in-depth understanding of the nature, methodology, and benefits of service learning provides teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan school and community-based experiences which will help their students to achieve many of the Goals 2000 standards.

School-To-Work and Service Learning

Service learning is an integral feature of efforts to achieve school-to-work objectives. Two broad areas noted in the SCANS Report (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills [for the workplace]) that are supported by service learning are: 1) the three part foundation and 2) the five competency areas.

In the three part foundations area, service learning contributes to the development of:

- Basic skills—language arts and math
- Thinking skills—making decisions, reasoning, creative thinking, and solving problems
- Personal qualities—those required in the workplace, e.g., integrity, honesty, responsibility, and sociability

Under the five competency areas, service learning contributes to student learning in the areas of:

- Resources—identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources
- Interpersonal—understands complex relationships
- Technology—works with a variety of technologies

Clearly, teacher educators need to assure that teachers are skilled in using service learning strategies if these applications in the school-to-work contexts are to be optimized.

Character Education and Service Learning

Character education and service learning are bound together by a common commitment to the broad goal of productive citizenship development. The commonalities across the two programs suggest that they are interrelated and can clearly function in an integrated manner. The process of providing service to the community certainly offers the opportunity for reflection and refinement of one's character. These experiences support our development of traits such as justice, fairness, tolerance, honesty, kindness, dependability, timeliness, and respect.

The education of teachers for both planning and using service learning and character education strategies is essential to renewing the power of these curricular areas in school programs.

Successful Service Learning in Teacher Education

Service learning is becoming an increasingly important methodology in both schools and teacher education programs. According to a 1995 report by the Council of Chief State School Officers, a majority of school districts in the country are engaged in some form of service learning (Shumer, 1997a). This development dictates the need to prepare professional educators in the nature and practices of service learning (Lyday & Winecoff, 1998).

One of the challenges to teacher educators is that service learning is being implemented in a variety of ways in schools. This is also true in teacher education where research has identified at least four different approaches to implementing service learning: 1) as an extracurricular activity, 2) as a practicum experience associated with a regular course, 3) as a separate service learning course, and 4) as a strand within a course or courses (Erickson & Anderson, 1997).

Whatever the approach, successful service learning courses or activities in teacher education should be built around four major components (Waterman, 1997).

Planning

Planning can be viewed from two perspectives depending on the level at which service learning has been developed within an institution.

First, it is an essential step in the process of integrating service learning into the teacher preparation program. To be successful, service learning should be planned as an integral part of the standard curriculum and the strategic planning process at both the initial certification and advanced levels. This will minimize the likelihood that service learning will be treated as a fad or as a temporary add-on to the curriculum. This planning process can be directed by questions such as the following:

- Which courses have the greatest affinity to the goals and objectives of service learning?

- Where in the curriculum sequence will selected service learning experiences be of greatest benefit to students (e.g., for career decisions, for mastering the methodology, for learning to assess the impact of service learning)?

Second, planning should be the first step in the development of specific service learning courses, activities, or projects.

- Course syllabi should include service learning objectives and requirements.
- The instructor, the student, and the host agency or organization should cooperatively describe and agree upon the major components of the experience including tasks, schedule, outcomes, supervision, and assessment.
- Planning should include the preparation of students and the host site including knowing how to act, what to expect, and sharing these expectations.

Implementation and Project Monitoring

The next major component to be considered in effective programs is project implementation and monitoring.

While monitoring is often considered as a part of the evaluation design, it should be focused on the ongoing implementation process and not on the final outcomes. During implementation, a good monitoring system is needed to ensure that the project is:

- Meeting logistical requirements such as scheduling, transportation, other resource needs
- Providing ongoing feedback to all stakeholders involved in the service learning activity

This ensures that the service learning experience will not be jeopardized because of unforeseen problems or failure to meet the

expectations of any of the key stakeholders. It also allows modifications to be made during the implementation process as needed.

Reflection and Celebration

Reflection and celebration distinguish service learning from other community service activities.

Through reflection, students analyze, synthesize, and make judgments about their service experiences. Reflection is an ongoing process and can take many different forms including:

- Written reflections like diaries, logs, or journals
- Oral reflections such as presentations and discussions with peers, supervisors, teachers, and others
- Storytelling
- Graphic representations

Students should be encouraged to develop their own culminating experiences which might integrate reflection with the celebration component of service learning.

Evaluation and Reporting

Evaluation and reporting should be based on the objectives of the service learning activity and should be designed during the planning process.

A comprehensive evaluation and reporting design would include both process evaluation and product development using quantitative and qualitative techniques. This will require the development of instrumentation and a plan for collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data. Student reflection products should be used as an integral part of the qualitative evaluation process.

Evaluation results should show:

- The extent to which objectives were met
- The degree to which activities were carried out as planned
- The impact of the experience on the agency and the clients of the agency
- The quality of the experience provided by the agency
- Any indication of the effect of the experience on student academic, social, and personal development

Service learning is a complex process that requires careful planning, implementation, and evaluation to be successful. The time spent on these functions will be reflected in the quality and impact of the experience on future and practicing teachers.

The Realities and Challenges of Doing Service Learning in Teacher Education

The use of service learning in teacher education includes challenges in key areas such as: professional development for teacher educators, curriculum and instruction planning, funding, scheduling, transportation, collaboration issues, and related organizational and value issues (Erickson & Anderson, 1997; Fertman, 1994).

Collaboration

We note the area of collaboration first because it offers many possibilities for effectively dealing with other challenges. The expanded resources for the "thinking through of service learning challenges" is inherent in well-organized service learning activities (Waterman, 1997). One of the authors (Swick) uses a three-dimensional approach to the collaborative planning of service learning activities in family involvement in early childhood teacher education courses: 1) goal articulation, 2) communication and planning with partnering agencies/schools, and 3) implementation and refinement of activities. Regular contacts with partnering agencies/schools, feedback from students doing service learning, and integration of the "service learning content" into the course content allows for meaningful experiences for the students.

A systematic approach to managing service learning placements and experiences, for example, can engage university-school/community partners in efforts to plan and share resources that resolve many financial, transportation, and training issues. Through discussion, sharing of resources, student input, and continuing evaluation of the process, service learning obstacles can become opportunities for new and more viable learning experiences.

Further, the involvement of staff from partner agencies/schools in the instructional process—on campus or at the site of the service learning—can increase student understanding of the context and possibilities in different service learning sites. Such involvement also

increases the integration of service learning into course goals and content.

Faculty Professional Development

Faculty professional development is critical to successful service learning in teacher education (Myers & Pickeral, 1997). Through experiential and scholarly study of service learning, teacher educators gain insights relative to using this pedagogical approach effectively. Three means for achieving faculty involvement in service learning professional development are noted (Erickson & Anderson, 1997):

- Provide several avenues for faculty to pursue learning about service learning. This might include visits to successful programs as well as opportunities to study at service learning conferences.
- Provide incentives and support that encourage faculty to experiment with service learning in their teacher education courses. This could include special grants to support faculty teaching innovations as well as support for furthering their study of service learning.
- Involve faculty in ongoing collaborative study groups, with interested school and community personnel, with service learning in teacher education as a major focus.

The formation of a faculty leadership team on service learning can provide a sustaining system for continuous professional stimulation from within the faculty itself (Wright, 1997).

Funding

The long-term success of service learning requires funding to support needed planning, redevelopment of program structure, and collaborative work in addition to addressing various implementation issues. As teacher education units institutionalize "school-based services" funding, they should include service learning. Collaborative

funding of service learning with community and school groups have proven effective in achieving meaningful programs for all concerned. Grants, community endowments, and student service learning fees are additional funding possibilities (Shumer, 1997a).

Scheduling and Transportation

Scheduling and transportation are additional challenges in implementing service learning in teacher education. Some effective responses to these challenges are:

- Use collaborative planning teams that include faculty, students, and host site staff to develop an appropriate match between course schedules, placement site needs, and student schedules.
- Select some service learning sites close to the campus for students who may lack transportation or whose schedules may preclude them from reaching sites of any travel distance.
- Where appropriate, use on-campus sites such as family or child care centers, research projects, or tutoring or mentoring programs different disciplines may have already established.
- Periodically review the service learning placement system. Acquire input from all participants. Use the results of these reviews to refine and adjust service learning placements.

Curriculum Integration

Perhaps the most critical challenge is to *integrate* service learning across the content and pedagogical areas of teacher education. While some courses or experiences may suggest a natural linkage to service learning, other facets of the program should be reviewed to see where service learning may meet particular needs.

The Voice of Teacher Education Students on Service Learning

What do students think of their service learning experiences? The answer to this question is a very powerful assessment of the value of service learning in teacher education. The findings of one teacher educator who teaches a course, Teachers and Teaching, and coordinates its practicum are very instructive regarding the student voice.

The professor uses a portfolio approach in which students are expected to identify and reflect on meaningful experiences during the semester as well as on other components of their education experience. This portfolio offers an in-depth picture of how students see service learning experiences in the context of their entire undergraduate teacher education program.

- The service learning experiences that often make lasting impressions on students are those that give them opportunities to learn about people from cultures different from their own.

One student reflected about her experience long after the course had been completed:

> "I had never had any experience with people who were so different from me . . . All of my friends were from families almost identical from mine and although I know that not everyone had the same childhood as I did, I had never had a relationship with anyone so different from me . . . I learned that differences are something to learn from . . . I often find myself wondering how they are doing."

This same professor uses seminars for student reflection. Student voices are enriched by the seminar opportunity as the reflections of the following student note:

> "At the beginning of the semester, I was not sure if I wanted to teach or not because none of my practicums had been as successful as this one. I especially liked

how at the end of each visit we all gathered together for the last twenty minutes and discussed what we had learned that day and what ideas we got from being in that classroom."

Student voices are better developed within service learning contexts where advanced organizers are used to guide observations and involvement. In Teachers and Teaching, the time prior to involvement in schools is used to address issues relating especially to the cultural linkages between home and school. One student voices her satisfaction with the integrated and planned service learning structure and its influence on her development:

> "I think one must have experience in and out of the classroom. The program here covers both of these, and I feel as though I am gaining the necessary training . . . The combination of community service, guest speakers, classroom observations and group discussions will better prepare us for our careers as teachers."

- Important to each individual's development is their conception of themselves as contributors and as growing persons.

Service learning can support this growth process as the following student voices suggest:

> "I really did not like the idea of working with exceptional students, but my views toward that have changed completely. I learned that I really do want to teach and I could possibly be a teacher in an exceptional classroom."

> "Teaching is a good choice for me because I've never thought of my education classes or practicums as really being work . . . I realize that with each day and experience my teaching philosophy is taking shape."

> "I thought teaching at the elementary level was for me until I visited this middle school. This experience has made me reconsider where I should teach . . . I was surprised at my ability to work with these older children."

Clearly, the student voice is enriched by new experiences gained in service learning placements. Sometimes a belief is reinforced, sometimes the experience enables the learner to re-think his position, and always, it helps students grow!

- Teacher education students also gain insights into the persona of being a professional educator through meaningful service learning.

  Consider the following comments in this regard:

  > "This is my first long experience with students this age—first grade is a huge change from high school students, and I thought it would be easier. What I have discovered is, that in any level of teaching, it takes great dedication and preparation to develop effective lesson plans and manage classroom learning and behavior."

  > "My understanding of teaching . . . has improved greatly. I know so much more about children's expectations, discipline, grading, and accommodating all the different levels of learning abilities."

Service learning in community and school/classroom situations strengthens the voice of teacher education students. Their personal growth as well as professional enhancement are seen in the observations and reflections shared in the above statements.

Promising Practices in Service Learning and Teacher Education

Effective service learning and teacher education experiences should be comprehensive in that students are introduced to and engaged in activities where they gain the needed knowledge, skills, and perspectives for using this pedagogy in their teaching (Erickson & Anderson, 1997). A service learning in teacher education scope and sequence that provides in-depth coverage of needed skills assures that students not only benefit from service learning but also acquire the necessary skills for using this important instructional methodology.

A Service Learning Integrated Partnership Project

The Service Learning Integrated Partnership Project at California State University-Chico uses a scope and sequence that integrates service learning into the total program for teacher education students (Davis & Bianchi, 1998). Service learning and a "Partners in Education" approach combine to engage students in gaining comprehensive service learning skills. Beginning with their preprofessional experiences and continuing through student teaching, teacher education students experience the following in three interacting phases—introduction, reinforcement, and application.

- Research, theory, pedagogy, and current practice of K-12 service learning
- Structure and philosophy of the Partners in Education (PIE) Service Learning Program
- Curriculum taught in the PIE Program
- Curriculum trends and best practice
- Service learning projects designed to integrate with academic subjects and enhance learning
- Service learning projects that are implemented during the student teaching field experience as part of a thematic unit
- Service learning conferences within the region and in the state
- Specific training offered by the PIE Program

Throughout their teacher education experience, students are introduced to the above concepts and practices through a combination of classroom assignments and assigned service learning activities. They gain reinforcement of these ideas through seminars and by keeping reflective journals. Ultimately, they integrate and apply these service learning skills in their development of an instructional unit in student teaching.

Integrating Service Learning in the Student Teaching Experience

The student teaching experience is an excellent context for having students plan and utilize service learning in various academic subjects. The following two examples were shared by student teachers:

- One student teacher reported that she planned her model teaching unit around a service learning activity that focused on improving the nutritional value of meals in the school cafeteria. The idea for the theme emerged from middle schoolers' complaints about the cafeteria food. These middle school students studied cafeteria menus, interviewed cafeteria staff, examined recommended nutritional values, and studied various other aspects of nutrition and food service. In teams, the middle school students also visited and studied other food service establishments in the community, especially those frequented by their middle school peers. They then analyzed their data and prepared a report on needed nutritional improvements in food served in the cafeteria and suggestions to improve the general eating habits of middle school students. They presented their report to the cafeteria staff, student council, and to several parent group meetings. They also published articles in the school newspaper and in the local newspaper.

- To introduce young children to the concept of service learning, a student teacher working in a kindergarten classroom designed activities where the children planned and carried out a special activity that would help someone in the community. The children worked in small groups of three and came up with many different ideas. One group painted pictures to take to a nearby senior citizens center. Another group made snacks for serving to a construction crew that was renovating a building next to them. Yet another group put on a play about their ideas for improving the community for the parent group. Eventually the children put together a booklet of all that they accomplished and presented it to their parents.

Integrating Service Learning Throughout the Internship Year

Recent developments in teacher education have stimulated the internship year in some Master of Arts in Teaching degree programs. What follows is a case presentation on how service learning might be integrated throughout the internship year. It is drawn from interviews with several teachers and the resulting synthesis offers new direction in this regard.

- Students begin the internship year co-planning a year-long service learning instructional unit with their supervising teacher. They learn about the academic goals of the unit, the needed elements for organizing and implementing the service learning activities, and the processes used in past years to carry out the activities.

In the second part of the school year, the interns take on the responsibility for being the lead person managing the service learning unit. They now plan the total process, including all instructional elements and the service learning component. This opportunity

enables them to see and carry out all of the elements of an integrated academic service learning based unit.

When asked to review the key tasks they achieved and what they learned as a result of their involvement, teacher education interns noted the following:

- I had to review and organize my thinking on what really needed to happen in a good quality academic service learning plan!
- The need for service learning to be a significant part of the curriculum unit forced me to link service learning activities to instructional goals and activities.
- I feel really prepared to do service learning in my classroom next year. I had to do all of the phone calling, conduct advance site visits, organize transportation, get needed parent helpers, orient the children to expectations for behavior, and manage the service learning activities.
- Linking service learning activities to our curriculum helped me see service learning as a valuable instructional method.
- In evaluating our service learning, I gained valuable insights from the children, our hosts, and my clinical teacher. I see how I can strengthen the process next year.

Seminars and Journals Help Enrich Service Learning for Students

Service learning is an inquiry process where reflection and refinement enable learners to enrich their understanding of various human events and activities. The learning cycle of plan-do-review can be enhanced through student journals and ongoing seminars (Myers & Pickeral, 1997).

Journals provide three valuable dimensions to having quality service learning experiences (Erickson & Anderson, 1997):

- Students develop a written record of what their experiences were about, thus creating a system for reflection and growth.
- Students can reflect on the meaning of these experiences, thus increasing the power of their application of theory and research to their work with students.
- Students can develop more sophisticated understandings of service learning as an instructional methodology.

Seminars offer contexts for the following:

- Sharing experiences
- Questioning particular activities they observed
- Probing new possibilities in service learning
- Discussing successful activities
- Exploring new solutions to problems

Particularly important, the seminar environment can stimulate networking and sharing of service learning content and experiences among teacher education students (Fertman, 1994).

Influences and Benefits of Service Learning in Teacher Education

The research base on service learning provides insight into the benefits of its use in teacher education. In addition to the obvious benefit to groups being served, the influences and benefits occur in three areas: students, faculty, and program functioning.

Teacher Education Students

Teacher education students report (Erickson & Anderson, 1997) that their service learning involvement has influenced them in various ways by:

- Increasing their understanding of community and family influences on children and young people
- Strengthening their teaching skills in terms of actually experiencing tutorial, mentoring, and small group instructional situations
- Broadening their understanding of teaching as a career—particularly in relation to gaining a more realistic understanding of the needed skills, attitudes, and commitments
- Increasing their self-confidence in working and relating to people from different cultures
- Enhancing their interest in doing future service work in the community, especially in helping children and young people

Coles (1993) notes that college students often experience a transformation of their values related to their role in improving the lives of people. Fertman (1994) also observes that service learning can be a catalyst for students becoming more sensitive and responsive to the needs of others.

Faculty

Teacher education faculty note several benefits to their use of service learning (Erickson & Anderson, 1997).

- Strengthens their planning of useful course activities, especially regarding the application of concepts and skills in meaningful contexts
- Increases their involvement in using inquiry oriented teaching strategies
- Provides more opportunities for initiating class discussion on teaching practices
- Enhances their own understanding of the realities of teaching, thus strengthening their skills in providing direction for students
- Provides a new structure for developing a viable clinical model for the education of teachers

Program Functioning

Service learning also supports many of the goals of teacher education programs.

- It offers opportunities for students and faculty to link theory and practice in ways that stimulate discussion, refinement of pedagogical strategies, and development of new teaching approaches (Kinsley, 1997).
- Service learning also involves students in planning, practicing different skills, and reflecting on their experiences—thus reinforcing basic pedagogical behaviors common to teaching (Erickson & Anderson, 1997).
- Truly collaborative service learning increased the partnering between professionals and the community in the education of teachers (Lyday & Winecoff, 1998).

Service learning is a potential source for transforming faculty, students, and programs in teacher education. Knowledge, concepts, strategies, and the overall pedagogical system of teacher education can be strengthened through service learning.

Evaluating Service Learning in Teacher Education

Three levels of assessment provide a context for considering purposes and means for evaluating service learning activities in teacher education (Shumer, 1997b).

- Documentation of the existing status of service learning
- Assessment of how the service learning program/activities are working within the design and function of teacher education
- Evaluation of the impact of service learning on various student, faculty, program, and community factors and outcomes

All three levels of assessment are integral to continuing refinement and improvement of service learning. Each faculty group can determine which facets of assessment and evaluation are needed at a given point in program development.

What Is the Status of Service Learning?

Any serious effort to design and integrate service learning into the teacher education program should begin with documenting and examining the current status of service learning in the program. Examples of questions that might be used to guide this documentation/analysis process include:

- What service learning activities are faculty currently using in their courses?
- What knowledge, skills, interests, and attitudes related to service learning have faculty exhibited or shown an interest in?
- Are current service learning activities linked to each other and to the academic program in any cohesive and meaningful way?
- What do student products or journal observations tell us about the substance and value of service learning activities?
- What community, university, and school sites are being used for service learning?
- What is the feedback from students and faculty on the value of these sites for enhancing their academic goals and learning?

How Effective Is Service Learning In Teacher Education?

Once the basic status of service learning is determined, a pedagogical "audit" can be used to assess its effectiveness. The ASLER Standards (Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform) should be used in this assessment process. The following are examples of questions that are based on the ASLER Standards.

- Are current service learning activities effective in meeting community needs and strengthening students' academic learning?
- Are students involved in the total service learning planning and implementation process, thus acquiring needed knowledge and skills for using service learning as an instructional strategy?
- Does the service learning process include planned and meaningful opportunities for student and faculty reflection on service learning and the integration of this learning into their continuing growth?
- Are service learning sites involved in the planning and work of the program?
- Is the service learning and teacher education program having a transforming influence on those being served in the community?

What Impact Is Service Learning Having?

Ultimately, the value of service learning in teacher education is seen in its influence on students, faculty, programs, and community. One of the most important evaluation issues is the positive impact service learning can have on almost every facet of life in a community. A framework for shaping a research agenda is provided by questions such as the following (Root, 1997):

- In what ways are students different as a result of service learning?
- What is happening in the community that service learning has influenced?

- How is service learning influencing the total teacher education program?
- What are faculty and students doing differently as a result of service learning?

Evaluation is key to strengthening all facets of service learning in teacher education. For example, students need feedback on the quality of their service and feedback on their cognitive and academic uses of service learning experiences. Faculty need to have feedback on their service learning goals, utility of activities, value of placements, and use of service learning as an instructional method. Community users of service learning need to assess how it is enhancing their services and how it may be increasing their potential as an empowering agent in the lives of people.

Possibilities for Putting Service Learning Into Your Teacher Education Program

Service learning is clearly an instructional approach that can enrich what we do in teacher education. It offers many possibilities for increasing student involvement in acquiring new concepts, practicing important skills, and reflecting on and refining various skills and behaviors. Consider the following as ways that you might begin to integrate service learning into your program.

- Review your current course goals and topics. Where can service learning activities strengthen student attainment of these goals?
- Participate in conferences or study groups that provide information on the specifics of using service learning in teacher education.
- Visit courses and programs that use service learning in effective ways and that have materials and resources to share with you.
- Select just one area of your course which can be adapted to incorporate the field testing of a service learning component.
- Involve students in your teacher education courses in identifying, selecting, and planning for the use of service learning activities.
- Do service learning activities yourself, reflect on what you gained from the experience, and share your thoughts with students and faculty.
- Evaluate your use of service learning; list ways you can improve it.

As a follow-up activity to reading this book, explore your thoughts and feelings about making service learning an integral part of your teacher education values. As you do this, consider the comments of one teacher education student who reflected on what a service learning experience meant to her:

> "I really enjoyed my experience at Lifton Elementary. I learned more about cultural diversity than I ever could have imagined. I gained new confidence in working with children and parents from cultures different from mine. Most importantly, I came away realizing that teaching is more a learning experience than anything else. I am better, richer, and more sensitive to the needs of others now."

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